IN THE CLAIMS:

The following Listing of Claims replaces all prior versions of the claims.

Listing of Claims:

1-66. (Cancelled)

67. (New) A method for testing a compound for its ability to act as an antagonist of Fc receptor comprising:

a) producing a recombinant soluble polypeptide with Fc binding ability, wherein said recombinant soluble polypeptide comprises:

i) an Ig binding domain of said Fc receptor or a fragment thereof; and

ii) a spacer for spacing said recombinant soluble polypeptide from a solid surface.

b) contacting said compound with said recombinant soluble polypeptide;

c) contacting a mixture of said compound and said recombinant soluble polypeptide with an immune complex;

d) measuring the degree to which said compound inhibits binding of said immune complex to said recombinant soluble polypeptide in (c); and

e) identifying the compound which inhibits binding of said recombinant soluble polypeptide with said immune complex as an antagonist of said Fc receptor.

68. (New) The method according to Claim 67, wherein said Fc receptor or fragment thereof is capable of binding to immunoglobulins selected from the group consisting of IgA, IgD, IgE, IgG and IgM.

69. (New) A method according to Claim 67, wherein the recombinant soluble polypeptide is a fusion protein.

70. (New) A method according to Claim 67, wherein said recombinant polypeptide is labelled with a tracer selected from the group consisting of radiolabels, reporting enzymes, flurogenic labels, beads labelled therewith and erythrocytes.

71. (New) A method according to Claim 67, wherein said recombinant polypeptide is attached to a solid support.

72. (New) A method according to Claim 67, wherein the compound identified as an inhibitor of said Fc receptor functions by binding to the Fc receptor, or by binding to an immune complex at the site where the Fc receptor binds.

73. (New) An antagonist compound isolated by the method of Claim 67.

74. (New) An isolated polypeptide with Fc binding ability, wherein the polypeptide comprises an Fc binding component comprising an extracellular region of a native FcγRII receptor and a fusion component.

75. (New) The polypeptide of claim 74 wherein the fusion component is selected from the group consisting of an immunoglobulin, human serum albumin (HSA), Fc receptor, complement receptor, cytokine receptor, dextran, carbohydrate and polyethylene glycol.

76. (New) The polypeptide of claim 75 wherein the fusion component is an immunoglobulin.

77. (New) The polypeptide of claim 74 which is soluble.

78. (New) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a polypeptide according to claim 74 together with a pharmaceutically appropriate carrier or diluent.

79. (New) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a polypeptide according to claim 75 together with a pharmaceutically appropriate carrier or diluent.

80. (New) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a polypeptide according to claim 76 together with a pharmaceutically appropriate carrier or diluent.

81. (New) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a polypeptide according to claim 77 together with a pharmaceutically appropriate carrier or diluent.

82. (New) A method of treatment of a disease where an excess of immunoglobulin is implicated as the causative agent of the disease, said method comprising administering an effective amount of the polypeptide according to claim 74 to a patient.

83. (New) A method of treatment of a disease where an excess of immunoglobulin is implicated as the causative agent of the disease, said method comprising administering an effective amount of the polypeptide according to claim 75 to a patient.

84. (New) A method of treatment of a disease where an excess of immunoglobulin is implicated as the causative agent of the disease, said method comprising administering an effective amount of the polypeptide according to claim 76 to a patient.

85. (New) A method of treatment of a disease where an excess of immunoglobulin is implicated as the causative agent of the disease, said method comprising administering an effective amount of the polypeptide according to claim 77 to a patient.

86. (New) A method of treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, said method comprising administering an effective amount of the polypeptide according to claim 74 to a patient.

87. (New) A method of treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, said method comprising administering an effective amount of the polypeptide according to claim 75 to a patient.

88. (New) A method of treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, said method comprising administering an effective amount of the polypeptide according to claim 76 to a patient.

89. (New) A method fo treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, said method comprising administering an effective amount of the polypeptide according to claim 77 to a patient.

90. (New) A method of removing immunoglobulin from a body fluid, said method comprising combining an effective amount of the polypeptide according to claim 74 with the body fluid.

91. (New) A method of removing immunoglobulin from a body fluid, said method comprising combining an effective amount of the polypeptide according to claim 75 with the body fluid.

92. (New) A method of removing immunoglobulin from a body fluid, said method comprising combining an effective amount of the polypeptide according to claim 76 with the body fluid.

93. (New) A method of removing immunoglobulin from a body fluid, said method comprising combining an effective amount of the polypeptide according to claim 77 with the body fluid.

94. (New) An antibody or fragment thereof, wherein said antibody or fragment specifically binds to the polypeptide of claim 74.